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ABSTRACT

The six national goals proposed at the Education Summit of 1989 and the ideas for reaching them delineated in "America 2000" are discussed in this document as they relate to school counseling in Ohio. Both "America 2000" and "Creating Opportunities for Success," Ohio's first annual report citing the state's progress towards these national goals, describe strategies to achieve a learning renaissance. After a list of the six national goals, the four parts of the national strategy is described, followed by a discussion of Ohio's commitment to the national goals which identifies five principles to serve as a guide in reaching them. The involvement of school guidance and counseling in achieving these goals is discussed, and it is noted that a planned guidance and counseling program identifies the results or outcomes to be achieved, contains a body of content, and uses varying intervention strategies to deliver this content to all students. Guidance as a shared responsibility with the community is emphasized in a separate section, and this is followed by a discussion of the responsibliity of counselor education focusing on the skills necessary for school counselors, and a description of initial efforts by counselors to reach the six national goals. The document concludes that "America 2000" and "Creating Opportunities for Success" seek learning and achievement for all students and that every guidance and counseling program can seek and plan for nothing less. (ABL)

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Meeting Tomorrow's Challenge:
A Message to Ohio's Counseling Professionals

Ohio Department of Education

Columbus, Ohio
November 1991

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Meeting Tomorrow's Challenge: A Message to Ohio's Counseling Professionals

At the Education Summit in 1989, President Bush and the nation's governors resolved to achieve six national goals by the year 2000. In 1991, *America 2000,* an education strategy to reach these goals, was proposed to the nation. *Creating Opportunities for Success* is Ohio's first annual report citing Ohio's progress toward these goals, reviewing successful programs currently in place to address them, and proposing a strategy to enable Ohio's students to reach them.

The six national goals and the national and state strategies proposed in order to reach them will require change in our education system, change in our communities, and primarily change in our behavior and vision. The national goals require the education community's involvement as a team and as part of an overall community commitment. The strategies for achieving the six goals ignore individual roles, reject ratios, require relevance, and demand accountability. They call for systemic reform and restructuring in our present schools, and for the creation of "new American schools."

What is proposed is, in essence, an education revolution. It is truly a changing world. Therefore, school counselors must rechannel their existing expertise, acquire new skills, and refocus their energies toward student learning and achievement if they are to fully participate in the schools' and the community's efforts to achieve the six national goals.

America 2000 and *Creating Opportunities for Success* describe strategies to achieve a learning renaissance. These strategies seek learning (knowledge, skills, and understanding) expressed through achievement that is measured by performance. They focus on the learner and address the responsibilities and relevance of existing and future institutions and programs that are, that should be, and that will be devoted to seeking these outcomes. They hold communities, schools, and their programs responsible for achieving these six national goals.

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The Six National Goals

It is expected that, by the year 2000,

1. All children in America will start school ready to learn
2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least ninety percent
3. Upon leaving grades 4, 8, and 12, American students will demonstrate competency in English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; will have learned to use their minds well; and will be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment
4. U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement
5. Every American adult will be literate, have the knowledge necessary to compete in a global economy, and will exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship
6. Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning

The National Strategy

The national strategy to achieve the goals proposed by *America 2000* has four parts, which focus on present, future, and past students and the communities in which they reside.

1. For today's students, the national strategy seeks to create better and more accountable schools by setting high standards in academic achievement, calling for national examinations, and promoting school reform that encourages public performance reports, allows local flexibility, and rewards progress toward excellence.
2. For tomorrow's students, the national strategy calls for the creative invention of new schools—"A New Generation of American Schools" for the new century. These new schools, based on the work of research and development teams, will "break the mold" of what are considered traditional schools.
3. For former students, those who are out of school and in the work force, the national strategy calls for new adult literacy activities, higher standards for job skills and knowledge, the development of business and community skill clinics, and the creation of a "nation of students" continuing to learn throughout their lives.
4. Finally, the national strategy envisions communities receptive to and involved in learning. In these communities, learning can happen through a commitment to the six national goals, cooperation with others involved in these goals, an awareness of the progress being made in achieving these goals, an emphasis on greater parental involvement in learning, and support for establishing a "new American school" in each community.

Ohio's Commitment to the National Goals

In developing an integrated strategy, Ohio has identified five principles to serve as a guide in reaching the six national goals:

1. Education is an outcome. It is not something that students "get," but rather something that results from their active participation in the learning process.
2. Our expectations must be high. Maintaining the status quo is not acceptable.
3. Assessment of progress and outcomes is essential for positive change. New assessment measures must be developed and used.
4. Coordination in the delivery of education services is an integral part of any strategy. Business, labor, political and community leaders, and parents must form broad coalitions with schools.
5. The success of reform efforts will be determined at the local level. The community's capacity to customize local strategies to meet the national goals will determine success.

To meet the goals established by the President and the nation's governors, Ohio has outlined a strategy to increase our efforts and record our progress toward achieving these goals.

To ensure that all Ohio children are ready to learn when they enter school (Goal 1), Ohio is committed to assuring that all children will receive the nutrition and health care needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies, that they have access to appropriate preschool programs, and that all parents have access to the training and the support they need to help their preschool children to learn.

To accomplish this, financial resources for child-care programs are now available to schools, early childhood centers are being piloted, Head Start Programs are receiving additional support, and the Ohio Early Childhood Curriculum Guide has been developed to help school districts serve children from birth through age eight. In addition, Ohio's Graduation, Reality, and Dual-Role Skills (GRADS) program continues to serve as a resource to pregnant students and young parents in grades 7 through 12. The programs Training Ohio's Parents for Success (TOPS) and Parents As Teachers (PAT) also promote parent participation in early schooling and serve as a link between learning at home and at school.

To assure that ninety percent of Ohio's students will graduate from high school by the year 2000 (Goal 2), Ohio has several programs in progress. *Classroom of the Future* pilot projects in eight school districts serve as models of integrated curricula, staff development, teaching innovations, and the use of technology. Additional current efforts to improve Ohio's high school completion rate are Jobs for Ohio's Graduates (JOG), a school-to-work transition program; the Effective Schools Process (ESP), which comprises programs to improve instruction and support services to students at risk of not graduating; GOALS, a program for teen parents who have dropped out; and Occupational Work Adjustment (OWA) and Occupational Work Experience (OWE), which both serve academically and economically disadvantaged at-risk students.

To improve student achievement and citizenship (Goal 3), Ohio has taken important steps through the Ninth-Grade Proficiency Tests and related intervention strategies. Other programs,

such as Ohio's Reading Recovery program and the Third-Grade Guarantee, also promote and record academic progress and performance.

Efforts to help Ohio's students excel at mathematics and science (Goal 4) include the model curriculum in mathematics currently being introduced in all Ohio school districts. This, along with Project Discovery, a staff-development program for middle and junior high school mathematics and science teachers, and the Early Math Placement Testing Program, an assessment of eleventh-grade students' readiness for college entry, strives to improve Ohio students' mathematics and science achievement.

Partnerships are the key to Ohio's efforts to achieve adult literacy and lifelong learning (Goal 5). Programs such as Tech-Prep (a combined secondary and postsecondary educational and occupational effort), Ohio's Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS), workplace literacy programs, and Career Passport (which documents academic and vocational skills), require coordination and collaboration between educational institutions and between education and business and industry. In addition, General Educational Development (GED) testing is available in every Ohio county.

Ohio's strategies to make its schools free of drugs and violence (Goal 6) emphasize the implementation of drug- and alcohol-prevention education programs in every school district and the organization of community-based teams. The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program in the early grades, the Ohio Network: Training and Assistance for Schools and Communities (ON-TASC), and the Ohio Prevention and Education Resource Center (OPERC) provide training and information to school and agency staff as well as to the community. Ohio's Effective Schools Program seeks safe and disciplined schools by promoting a positive learning climate and parent and community involvement.

In summary, the national goals and the strategies to reach them call for accountability through student results, program relevance, and staff responsibility. The goals and strategies propose reform, restructuring, and revolution to achieve these results. They are concerned with achievement, performance, outcomes, and accountability. They are about coalitions, collaborations, and involvement, and they view the school as an integral part of the community and as an extension of parents.

Guidance and Counseling Involvement

For guidance and counseling programs to be increasingly relevant and responsible to the national goals, they must reexamine and determine their goals and expected outcomes, their content, their conceptual approach, and their strategies in the context of a planned program.

> Counselors...need to think more conceptually about the outcomes and results they can and do achieve rather than confining themselves to implementing a set of processes and services without a clear sense of the behavioral outcomes they intend to produce...(Herr, 1989).

A planned guidance and counseling program identifies the results or outcomes to be achieved, contains a body of content, and uses varying intervention strategies to deliver this content to all

students. It can be evaluated and is held accountable for the results it achieves and the difference it makes, not for whether certain functions or strategies are in place.

In 1986, a national study of guidance and counseling by the Commission on Precollege Guidance and Counseling of the College Board emphasized the need for such planned approaches to school counseling. It recommended (1) a broad-based approach based on student needs, (2) a determination of the expected results of such an approach, (3) a program to monitor and promote student potential, (4) the involvement of parents in the learning activities of students, and (5) a program that starts in the early years of a child's development.

Planned or results-based guidance and counseling programs have been operating for almost a decade. In 1982, Johnson and Johnson delineated the features and emphasis of such programs. These included establishing an acceptable, constant level of competence for all students and varying the process to achieve these competencies; recognizing that members of the counseling staff vary in their competency and preferences; establishing a guidance philosophy, conceptual model, student competencies, and a management system to monitor and evaluate student progress; and focusing the program on the individual student, not on the education system nor on the roles and functions of the guidance and counseling staff.

Although the content of guidance and counseling programs addresses such results as social and personal adjustment, educational and career planning, human growth and development, self-esteem, parenting skills, and emotional health, it is how these results enhance learning that justifies the program's existence.

The goal or outcome of all guidance and counseling programs is learning. All program content—all intervention strategies—must focus on learning. In this respect, a guidance and counseling program is similar to all other school programs. The relevance of the guidance and counseling program to the national goals lies in *its* primary goal—learning. Guidance and counseling programs must address whatever interferes with a child's ability to learn, succeed, and actually participate in the learning process. Although the content of guidance and counseling programs addresses such results as social and personal adjustment, educational and career planning, human growth and development, self-esteem, parenting skills, and emotional health, it is how these results enhance learning that justifies the program's existence. Educational excellence requires personal excellence and the ability of an individual to utilize the educational opportunities available. The content of the guidance and counseling program and the varying strategies used to implement that content are the means to this end.

The content of guidance and counseling programs addresses student needs. These needs are expressed as the gap, or the difference, between the expected progress and the actual progress in the students' personal, social, educational, and career development. Competency in these

developmental areas facilitates learning and achievement. For growth and development, it is critical for students to acquire at an early age, a solid base of motivation, aspirations, positive attitudes, self-acceptance, and knowledge of alternatives. And it is critical for students to continue to build on these throughout life.

Competencies such as study skills, test-taking skills, resource utilization, problem-solving skills, interpersonal and social skills, educational and career-planning skills, self-esteem, self-knowledge, occupational knowledge, employability skills, decision-making skills, conflict resolution, listening skills, and knowledge of learning styles form a core content of guidance and counseling programs.

Such competencies serve as intermediate outcomes in their own right. Yet, they in turn, also allow students to more fully and effectively participate in and use the learning opportunities available in school and in the community. They, in essence, facilitate the long-term outcome of all programs—learning, achievement, and attainment of the six national goals.

Guidance As a Shared Responsibility

> ...the fact is that schools reside in larger community contexts which include institutions, persons, processes, and resources that have the potential to facilitate child development...In this sense, communities, not just schools, have responsibility for the guidance of youth. Typically, paradigms describing the organization and delivery of guidance services...do not conceive of the potential interaction of youth-serving agencies and schools as capable of being brought into collective action to serve common goals within a geographical entity. (Herr, 1991, p. 7)

If results-based guidance and counseling programs are to be involved with, and relevant to, the six national goals and the strategies proposed to reach them, then the programs must expand to a community-wide approach. If they are to contribute to the renaissance in learning, the usual association with other school-based pupil services and with community agencies will no longer suffice. Guidance and counseling programs should not be confined to a school setting. What is proposed for each Ohio community is what Herr (1991) describes as a "community-based guidance program." He sees the central elements of such a program as the empowerment of parents as guidance agents and the inclusion of a range of resource possibilities within communities that have not historically been defined as guidance in intent nor accommodated in a broad vision of school responsibility. Such a program would be results-based but would go beyond the typical cooperation, coordination, and even collaboration found in many school districts and communities. Such a program should have the following features:

1. A community-wide guidance program steering council should design the program's philosophy, outcomes, and resources. Its primary function would be to unite, as a common staff, the variety of persons and resources devoted to the program's philosophy and outcomes. The guidance needs of children, adolescents, and adults would be treated as a continuum.
2. The school and the community's youth-serving organizations and agencies should systematically network. Such networking would extend the content and strategies of a

guidance program beyond school hours, throughout the summer, and at other times when the schools' pupil services are not normally available. Parents, adolescents, and adults could benefit from such extended programs. In most communities, there are parallel youth-serving programs in the school and in the communities. These systems have not generally been integrated or linked systematically as parts of a community guidance program.

3. Systematic collaboration should exist between the school, business and industry, and other civic organizations for the purpose of achieving guidance and counseling program outcomes. The provision of personnel from business, industry, and civic organizations as resources and role models can assist school programs in helping children and adolescents acquire expected competencies.
4. The school and parents should systematically collaborate. Including parents in the guidance plan empowers them to be effective and secure in their parental role and in their capability to reinforce readiness and planning in their children. A community-based guidance program would consider parents as agents of guidance. Parents are the primary arbiters of students' academic motivation. In a community-based program, parents are given opportunities to participate in shaping the program and its outcomes. Parents must also have access to resources and training to meet their children's learning needs.
5. A different perspective is needed for the school-based guidance and counseling program. A community-based guidance program would not assume that the school counselor alone would provide all the guidance and counseling responses to children's needs. Instead, the counselors would "broker" opportunities throughout the community guidance system. Guidance staff also would emphasize leadership and management skills as well as collaboration with other professionals within the school system and the community at large. Such a community guidance program would also allow the school guidance and counseling program to focus more fully on academic issues within the school.

If results-based guidance and counseling programs are to be involved with, and relevant to, the six national goals and the strategies proposed to reach them, then the programs must expand to a community-wide approach.

Counselor Education Responsibility

Although it is necessary for counseling and guidance program staff to redirect their present skills and acquire new skills to focus on the national goals, it is equally important for counselor education programs to recognize the importance of outcome-based school and community guidance and counseling programs.

They must assume responsibility to redirect *their* program outcomes toward equipping present and future counselors to fully participate in the strategies and to meet the challenges inherent in achieving the national goals.

To be effective in this national, state, and local school and community effort, counselors must be viewed as fellow educators with skills and content relevant to learning and achievement. The counselor must be a teacher, a learner, a consultant, and a partner on a school and community team that shares knowledge, content, skills, and a common goal. All aspects of the school and community educational effort are relevant to all who are involved.

If counselors are to function effectively as a member of the school and community program staff and are to use the human growth and development knowledge and the counseling and other helping skills and techniques that they acquire in training, they must also have

1. An understanding of learning and achievement and the intervention strategies to achieve both
2. A knowledge of achievement standards and the criteria used to verify that these standards have been reached
3. Familiarity with the schools' curricula and the community's expectations of students
4. The ability to develop, implement, and manage a planned program based on the results and outcomes expected of students, teachers, and parents
5. Knowledge of family interactions and parenting skills
6. Measurement and research skills to provide understanding and continuity between achievement and performance measures
7. Familiarity with schools and their staff as well as with community agencies' staff, civic organizations, business and industry, and other resources that enhance learning
8. Evaluation skills to direct program change in a way that provides more relevance to achieving the national goals

Counselors must be prepared to share the leadership responsibilities needed to provide personal, social, educational, and career learning experiences that result in motivated, educated learners.

Counselors' Initial Efforts

The national and state strategies proposed for the six national goals have concentrated more on promoting desired results and individual effects than on prescribing specific roles and individual efforts needed to achieve the effects. For counselors seeking to focus their efforts and expertise toward implementing national, state, and local strategies to accomplish the national goals, several initial efforts can direct the guidance and counseling program toward this end.

First, counselors must examine and explain how their current program and activities promote learning and achievement as specified in the national goals. Second, counselors must immediately develop a strategy to equip parents to support their children's development and learning and to involve parents as partners in the school's program and particularly in the guidance and counseling program. Third, counselors must be familiar with, must be involved in, and must contribute to at least the programs being implemented as a part of Ohio's strategies described in *Creating Opportunities for Success.* If they are in the school, the school's guidance staff should become a part of them. If they are operating elsewhere, make others aware of them and seek means to implement them locally.

In addition, the following activities are suggested not as an all-inclusive effort, but as some processes to identify and initiate programs to address the national agenda. The primary goal or goals are identified for each activity.

1. Establish and maintain an individual learning plan for each child starting school. Such a plan, developed with the child's parents, would record and verify achievements, learning styles, diagnostic data, parent comments, possible barriers, anecdotal information, and progress toward succeeding in school (Goal 1).
2. Become a trainer in the *Training Ohio's Parents for Success (TOPS)* program (all goals).
3. Contact, and establish a program whereby, local medical professionals distribute to new parents information that is prepared in concert by counselors and parents and that equips the new parents to support their children's development and learning and links them with services and resources they may need (Goal 1).
4. Conduct workshops for parents concerning Activity 3 and establish a local network of parent mentors for new parents (Goal 1).
5. Become familiar with, and work with, other school and community staff in implementing *Ohio's Early Childhood Curriculum Guide* (Goal 1).
6. Establish an articulation plan and meet on a regular basis with all district counselors, other pupil services staff, and community agency staff to address and articulate learning needs and the progress toward achieving the national goals (all goals).
7. After the second grade, initiate and maintain for each student a Personal Pupil Education Plan that incorporates the Individual Learning Plan and includes career and educational plans (all goals).
8. Develop an intervention plan that addresses causes of poor test performance, such as lack of acquisition skills, poor organizational and study skills, and test-taking difficulties (Goals 3 and 4).

9. Establish a progam to familiarize parents, teachers, and students with stereotyping's effect of discouraging students from pursuing, progressing in, and succeeding in mathematics and science (Goal 4).
10. Provide teachers and parents with training and information to (a) improve their responsiveness to varied learning styles and diversity, (b) improve their skills in observing and assessing children's work in different content areas, and (c) enable them to share their assessments of a student's performance (Goals 1, 3, and 4).
11. Develop and provide consumer-like information to parents and students to help them understand and take advantage of different choices and options, such as various optional programs in the school, postsecondary selections, high school courses, and the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program (Goals 2 and 5).
12. Set guidance and counseling program priorities and performance standards (all goals).
13. Be familiar with and involved in the district's K-12 drug- and alcohol-prevention plan (Goal 6).
14. Participate in the *Ohio Network: Training and Assistance for Schools and Communities,* the *Ohio Prevention and Education Resource Center, Teen Institute,* and *Youth-to-Youth* programs (Goal 6).
15. Train parent trainers to provide workshops for parents on substance education (Goal 6).
16. Use existing data, such as from the *Education Management Information System (EMIS),* the ACT's *Collegiate Profile,* and follow-up studies, to identify current and former students' needs.
17. Personally develop and implement a professional development plan to acquire the skills and competencies needed to contribute to students' learning needs and to the strategies needed to achieve the national goals.

The preceding examples should be viewed not as a prescription of the counselor's role, but rather as a description of some initial activities that counselors can implement as a part of the local strategies to reach the national goals. The intent is not to "carve out" an individual role for counselors. The isolation of individual roles rejects the team concept. It emphasizes the counselor's process and not the student's progress. Collaboration is then reduced to an unequal relationship viewed as "helping others do *their* jobs," rather than as a relationship of shared responsibility and mutual support expressed as "helping each other do *our* job." Therefore we must identify ways that counselors can share the responsibility for, and establish an ownership of, the national goals.

Summary

The six national goals and the strategies proposed to achieve them are emphatic in their insistence on total community involvement and parental integration in the learning process. Counselors, if they are to be involved in this national and state effort, must expand their programs to incorporate the community and parents as partners in their process, and at the same time refocus their goals to specify results and outcomes that contribute to the national goals.

First and foremost, counselors must reaffirm their commitment to and involvement with learning. Although they are not directly responsible for what teachers teach, counselors are responsible for how students learn—and, consequently, for what students learn. They—along with teachers, parents, and their community counterparts—must become managers of that learning, recognizing that the primary cause of learning is the student, not the staff.

Although they are not directly responsible for what teachers teach, counselors are responsible for how students learn—and, consequently, for what students learn.

It is this focus on the student, the collaboration with other adults, and the exercise of leadership and management skills that can provide the greatest contribution to achieving the goals set forth for America. The national strategies—assuming more accountability, meeting students' learning needs innovatively, learning continually, and transforming communities to be receptive to learning—all have a place in the new community-based guidance programs.

Specifically, *America 2000* and Ohio's *Creating Opportunities for Success* assign no individual roles. They hold everyone responsible for achieving these national goals. They require involvement and commitment from all personnel and programs. Each local guidance and counseling program must address the national goals through its own goals. Local program strategies must coincide with the national strategy and with the strategies and programs in Ohio that strive to achieve these goals. *America 2000* and *Creating Opportunities for Success* seek learning and achievement for all students. Every guidance and counseling program can seek and plan for nothing less.

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